

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

Periodic Reporting

Docket No. RM2003-3

MOTION OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
FOR FURTHER EXTENSION OF TIME TO FILE COMMENTS

(June 6, 2003)

In Order No. 1358 (January 8, 2003), the Commission initiated this rulemaking to consider several proposed amendments to its rules governing periodic reports. As noted in the Postal Service's initial comments, filed February 10, 2003, the proposed revisions formulated by the Commission focused on updating current rules to reflect changes in the Postal Service's reporting practices, revising the reporting requirements to account for the increasing prevalence and use of electronic formats, and substantially expanding the existing rules to require the ongoing production of materials normally filed only in connection with omnibus postal rate cases.<sup>1</sup> In its initial comments, the Postal Service followed the Commission's suggestion in Order No. 1358 that it consult with the Commission's staff in an informal technical conference to explore the reasons for and implications of the proposed revisions. Subsequently, the Postal Service requested additional time to develop comments, in light of the information

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<sup>1</sup> Initial Comments of the United States Postal Service, Docket No. RM2003-3, at 1-2 (Feb. 10, 2003).

learned at the technical conference.<sup>2</sup> In Order No. 1367, the Commission granted an extension until May 9, 2003.<sup>3</sup>

On May 8, 2003, the Postal Service filed a motion noting that it had been directed by the Board of Governors to request a further extension of time to file comments.<sup>4</sup> In light of the Board's consideration of the proposed rules, in Order No. 1371, the Commission granted an extension until June 9, 2003.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission's proposals for amending and substantially expanding the scope of its rules, and requiring the annual production of data not normally produced as periodic financial and operations reports, has evoked a significant dialogue within the Postal Service concerning the merits and implications of the proposed revisions. Up to now, the discussions within the Postal Service and its Board of Governors have focused on four main areas: (1) cost and burden of production; (2) the respective roles of the Postal Service and the Commission in the statutory scheme; (3) the Postal Service's status as a litigant in rate cases that are initiated at the direction of the Board of Governors; and (4) the confidentiality of commercially sensitive records and other information protected from unwarranted public disclosure. As noted in the Postal Service's motion for an extension filed April 2, 2003, furthermore, the proposals could

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<sup>2</sup> Motion of the United States Postal Service for Extension of Time to File Comments, Docket No. RM2003-3 (April 2, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Order Granting Postal Service Request to Extend the Date for Comments, Order No. 1367, Docket No. RM2003-3 (Apr. 8, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Motion of United States Postal Service for Further Extension of Time to File Comments, Docket No. RM2003-3 (May 8, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Order Granting Postal Service Motion to Further Extend Date for Filing Comments, Order No. 1371 (May 19, 2003).

have significant implications for the relationship between the Postal Service and the Commission.

The inquiries of the President's Commission on the United States Postal Service are currently exploring topics that either overlap or would have significant implications for some of the same considerations raised by the Postal Rate Commission's proposed amendments. When the President's Commission issues its recommendations concerning the future of the Postal Service and the Postal Rate Commission in July of this year, its views could cast an important new light on the future roles of the two postal agencies, as well as the issues presented by the Rate Commission's periodic reporting rulemaking. In this regard, the Postal Service is not reluctant to discuss the hard questions presented in the rulemaking. Nevertheless, in light of the timing of the President's Commission's report, the Postal Service believes that its comments will lack an important context, if they are presented prior to knowledge of the President's Commission's recommendations. Accordingly, the Postal Service respectfully suggests that its comments be filed in late August, after the President's Commission issues its findings.

Our experience in considering the Postal Rate Commission's proposed rules so far indicates that the further consideration of the rules within the context of the President's Commission's report is likely to stimulate, and perhaps reorient, the internal debate over the amendments. We therefore respectfully suggest that the Rate Commission set a date for further comments falling at the end of August or early September, to allow time for coordination of views from various levels of the Postal

Service during late summer, when key officials are sometimes on leave or travel.

In light of the apparent postponement of the need for another omnibus rate proceeding as the result of recent legislation pertaining to retirement liability, the Postal Service believes that the need for expedition in the instant rulemaking has been substantially relieved, and that no party would be disadvantaged by deferring the deadline for comments. In this regard, the Postal Service understands the Commission's comments in Order No. 1371, in which the Commission expressed hope that any forthcoming rule changes affecting the Cost and Revenue Analysis (CRA) would apply retroactively to the recently issued CRA report for FY 2002.

For the above reasons, the Postal Service respectfully requests that it be permitted to file its further comments in the instant proceeding at the end of August or the beginning of September.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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June 6, 2003

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that I have this date served the foregoing document in accordance with Section 12 of the Rules of Practice.

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